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Fall 1995

Issue 33

A non-profit organization for the enhancement of amateur radio, worldwide peace, and friendship
Daily Information Session—14.236 @ 23:30Z

Pratas Island—1995 *by Wayne Mills, N7NG*

Nearly three years ago, the process began to add Tung-sha-Dao (Pratas Island) to the DXCC list. In January, 1994, a group of amateurs, including Martti Laine, VR2BH, traveled to Pratas and put the island on the air. Because no non-Taiwanese were permitted to remain on Pratas after the supply plane returned to Taiwan, Martti operated for about two hours before going QRT.

Later in 1994, another Pratas trip was organized and conducted by a group of Taiwanese DXpeditioners. This DXpedition was more successful. Over a five-day period, the operators recorded over 5,000 QSOs throughout the world.

At the same time, William Wu, BV2VA, headed an effort to organize a larger scale operation. With the help of Senator Ken Chang, BV2RA, authorization was received to invite non-Taiwanese to remain on the island for the duration of the expedition.

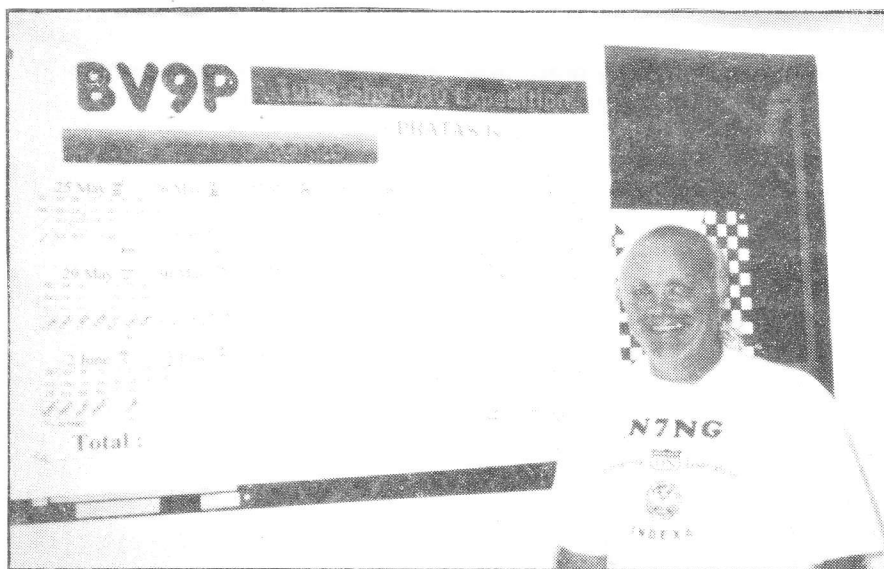
A trip was eventually scheduled for late May, 1995.

I felt fortunate to be included as an operator for this expedition along with Jun, JH4RHF, and Mike, JH1KRC. In the island's recent military history, the three of us were the first foreigners to remain overnight.

Traveling to Pratas

After some scheduling changes I left for Taipei on Monday, June 22nd.

Originally, I was to take the second of two scheduled flights but the second



Wayne Mills, N7NG

flight was cancelled. Unfortunately, this information reached me six hours before the only alternative transportation was scheduled to depart. I was obliged to take an earlier flight in order to make it at all.

I arrived in Taipei with no additional difficulty and quickly joined the effort.

After completing the logistical aspects of the preparations, we loaded the gear and headed for the airport where we were scheduled to take a C-130 flight to Pratas. Approximately eighteen amateurs were included on the flight to Pratas but only eight of us would stay on the island. The remainder would return

with the C-130 later in the afternoon.

Martti came to Taiwan for the flight to Pratas and made the first QSOs, but due to business obligations he was unable to remain for the duration of the expedition.

The radios were set up and most of the antennas were erected while the Taiwanese were on the island. They were involved in the initial contacts; then we bade them farewell and got down to work.

Operating Conditions

Conditions were initially quite good but by Monday and Tuesday they had deteriorated. Working North and South America was difficult. With the exception of

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the West Coast, openings were limited. Europe suffered no propagation difficulties and we were able to work well into the third and fourth layers of DXers.

Later in the week, band conditions improved but other problems arose. At times, A.C. power supply problems limited our transmitter power output and we were forced to operate on batteries, running the transceivers at about 25 to 50 watts. Although this difficulty hampered some of our efforts, the army graciously assisted us by providing large batteries that alleviated some of our problems. In addition, the army allowed us to operate from a more restricted area where alternative power was available.

Life on Pratas

Living conditions on Pratas were pleasant. Other than the high temperature and humidity, we fared well.

The food was basic army issue but it was an easy adjustment. Fortunately, the sleeping quarters were air conditioned—it's difficult to sleep in high heat and humidity.

Making new friends

The friendships were super. Meeting new friends is always a plus on DXpeditions and this one was no exception.

Bruce and Paul, Jimmy and William, Chung and Mike, Wu and Jun, were all great.

Typhoon watch

During the last few days we learned that a typhoon was bearing down on the island and was scheduled to arrive on our departure date. This would have meant postponing our departure by ten days or returning aboard a supply ship in four day's time. Needless to say, we preferred to fly back to Taiwan.

In the end, the typhoon's path changed and we were spared the inconvenience of a long delay.

Gracious hosts

When we returned we were met at the airport by Senator Ken Chang, BV2RA;

Tim, BV2A; and others. It was an honor to meet Tim after several QSOs over many years.

Later that evening the Pratas group enjoyed a wonderful Chinese dinner, hosted by the CTARL.

QSO Tallies

In the end, we made approximately 25,000 QSOs with 4,200 in North and South America, 7,500 in Europe, and the remainder with Japan and the local area.

A point of interest was the large

number of BV amateurs heard during the expedition. While we see many BV spots on our clusters and hear quite a number of different BV amateurs on the bands, I had no idea of the hundreds of amateurs now active in Taiwan. These amateurs are very enthusiastic about amateur radio activities and their improved DXing skills should be applauded.

In fact, I hope they are already planning a return trip to Pratas Island. I still need BV9P for DXCC!

73, Wayne

Next issue:

Results of INDEXA's 1995-1996 election!

Beaming Stateside by Paul Gromatzky, 9L1PG

My shack and home, located high on a hill, less than a mile from the water's edge, overlook the Atlantic Ocean.

My station consists of a Kenwood TS530S with a 3-element tribander about 60-feet above the ground. At this time, the non-rotatable antenna is fixed at 310 degrees, aimed at the United States.

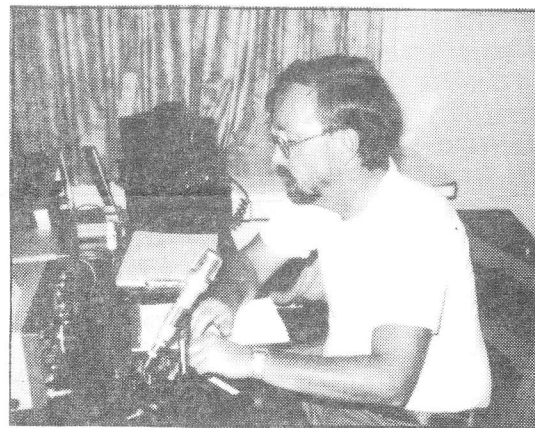
The operating environment is unique. Because we have no commercial power, we operate on generator power 24 hours a day.

Though real estate is at a premium, plans are underway to add to the antenna complement. The next project is a 30-meter inverted vee.

Sierra Leone has two seasons. One is hot and wet; the other is hot and dry with

temperatures ranging from 80-85° F. The rainy season usually lasts four to five months and the average rainfall is about 200 inches per year.

73, Paul



Paul, 9L1PG, operating high above the Atlantic.
(Photo by Cecil C. Williams, Jr., NW8F)

North Cook Island—ZK1KH by Ken Holdom, ZL2HU

How often does one have the opportunity to take his XYL to visit her family and operate from an island like North Cook? Ken, ZL2HU, does it about every five years.

The trip started with the confirmation of our return flight to New Zealand; however, we had difficulty making travel arrangements to the island of Pukapuka in the North Cook Island group.

Once we solved the transportation problem, we boarded a twin engine airplane with seating space for twenty. Because of the weight of the extra fuel required to get to North Cook, only ten passengers were allowed on board.

After a five-hour flight, the plane landed on an adjoining island—one with an airstrip. The plane was sprayed and the passengers disembarked into the sweltering heat where perspiration became an instant problem.

A forty-minute outboard boat ride transported us to the main island of Pukapuka.

Power problem?

Power for island homes is generated by a solar system providing 24 volts for lights (and nothing else!). This meant radio was out! Or was it?

We were greeted with many long, festive dinners after which the Government Representative invited me to set-up my rig in his generator-powered home.

My operating hours were limited. Power was not available 24-hours a day and you must remember, I was here because of a long-awaited visit with my XYL's family.

We had a great family visit (except when the temperature reached 42 degrees Celsius in the shade).



*Cool operating by Ken, ZK1KH!
(Home call ZL2HU)*

QSLs

All cards are out. If you have problems with yours, contact me at my home call, ZL2HU.

73, Ken

Heard Island—1995

Ralph, K0IR, reports that the following operators have met the requirements and will be part of the Heard Island operating team.

In addition to K0IR, there will be KK6EK, N6EK, PA3DUU, ON6TT, HB9AHL, RA3AUU, and JH4RHF.

The anticipated arrival on Heard Island is scheduled for November 12th. Departure is planned for December 1st. Bad weather could alter these dates.

Each team member personally contributed large sums of funds but they must rely on outside contributions and QSL returns for the much needed remainder.

QSL via INDEXA

c/o John H. Parrott, Jr., W4FRU
P. O. Box 5127
Suffolk, VA 23435 USA

New Life Members.....

7L1MFS, VE7IX, HK1KYR, OE2SNL, OA4SH, WA4VQD, 9L1PG, F5LBM, F5IUE, N7SQU, PP2FN, WA8VSJ, JJ1BMB, K8LA, KA7OCW, W6QON, W2RQ, K5CZD, and KO4RQ

Extra Help Provided By.....

W4USW, W6JET, VE3BLU, HK1KYR, 7L1MFS, KO6QX, KG0DS, W1LW, IK2PZU, 9L1PG, K0RW, DU9ECX, JA8GTO, KA2PHQ, N8WAK, N2BWE, K2JF, KA6KUT, HE9DWW, I5OLR, PT2FR, JF1AGB, KF2IZ, JT1BMB, AB7CX, IK7XUQ, EA6BH, W5VCS, KM4LS, KC1MI, K5CZD, WD6EYD, VK9NH, DH8YHR, and NK9O

**Your help is always appreciated.
Thank you for supporting INDEXA!**

The Ethics of DXing

Have you ever wondered how Joe DXer moved up so fast when you didn't? You and I both know the rules and follow them, right?

Well, not all do. Ok, then, if some break the rules in the DXCC program, who's supposed to be minding the store?

In response, we offer an extract from Bill Kennamer's, K5FUV, column, "How's DX?" (QST, October, '95)

"It's sad to report that there are still a few pretenders out there who somehow, although they probably have the stations and the skill, want the rewards of being known as great DXers without doing the work. They don't want to devote the time to work the DX stations, might not want to QSL, or just can't wait for that elusive rare one to show up. For them, there's always the easy way: Get a card any way possible and pretend they've worked that 3Y0 station on 160 meters or the BV2 at

noon on 80. If necessary, they even print their own cards.

"So far this year we've disqualified six DXers who tried to push the limits too far...You won't be seeing their call signs in the listing anymore for a while—in fact, quite a while. For those who don't know, the penalty is pretty stiff for someone who's accomplished a lot, or at least says they have. First, the DXer's record is *cleared* from the ARRL data base—even the legitimate contacts. Then the DXer must wait five years before reapplying to the Awards Committee for entry into the program. No contacts will be accepted for the period from disqualification to reentry. The DXer will have a fresh start. One other thing: His record will be flagged forever, noting that he didn't play by the rules once, and his QSL cards will be subjected to greater scrutiny and random audits.

"The six disqualified DXers this year is probably a

record. But the year's not over yet and there are four more cases waiting on the desk for further action. One of those will positively be brought before the Awards Committee soon, probably before you read this, and the others are awaiting confirmation from DX operators and QSL managers. It's likely the number of disqualifications may go even higher before the year is over.

"If anyone is considering trying to get away with something, or who may have in the past, remember that every submission may be subject to scrutiny. The Pretenders who tried this year were well up there on all bands and modes—some with No. 1 plaques—but wanted to be higher in the band or mode listings.

"Enough said this year..."



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